

MICROLEPIDOPTERA: A REVIEW FOR THE YEAR 1980

By the Rev. D. J. AGASSIZ *

Despite a year when the weather was not encouraging, many interesting species of Microlepidoptera were found. Three species were discovered new to Britain, others little known were rediscovered or their known range extended.

These advances must be largely due to the increase of interest in the smaller moths. There is now a larger and abler band of 'micro-men' than for many years. Added to this much has been contributed by the specialisation undertaken by those researching into families in preparation for writing their respective parts of 'The Moths & Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland.'

To comment on individual species I will consider those of note in the order in which they appear in 'A Check List of British Insects' by Kloet & Hincks (1972)

INCURVARIIDAE

A second British specimen of *Lampronia flavimitrella* (Hübner) was taken in Kent by J. M. Chalmers-Hunt on 24.v.80, the first specimen was taken in Hampshire by the late D.W.H. Ffennell in 1974; but the life history remains a matter of speculation.

TINEIDAE

The breeding of three specimens of *Monopis fenestratella* (Heyd.) from a Kestrel's nest by Dr. A. N. B. Simpson, is a remarkable discovery of a species not seen for many years. It has never been common in this country and very encouraging is the knowledge that it is still resident.

LYONETIIDAE

As in 1979 mines of *Lyonetia clerkella* (Linn.) were particularly abundant.

Combined field excursions by groups of specialists are always liable to produce new discoveries and we await with interest the outcome of *Bucculatrix* mines on *Myrica gale* found on Anglesey by J. D. Bradley, A. M. Emmet, J. R. Langmaid and E. C. Pelham-Clinton. They correspond to no known British species (These have now yielded *B. cidarella* Zell. So only the foodplant is new).

GRACILLARIIDAE

I am not aware of any significant discoveries in this family, but the comparative scarcity of *Phyllorycter* mines is worthy of comment.

*The Vicarage, High View Avenue, Grays, Essex RM17 6RU.

YPONOMEUTIDAE

The emergence of a long series of *Swammerdamia passerella* (Zett.) from larvae I collected in Scotland in 1979, confirms the existence of the species as a good species, and reinstated it on the British list where it once stood bearing the name *S. nanivora* Stainton. The abundance of such a species in the mountains of the Scottish Highlands suggests that many more species might remain there undiscovered. One thinks of several species recently discovered in the boreo-alpine regions of Scandinavia.

Digitivalva perlepidella (Staint.), which used to be regarded as very scarce and local in Kent and the Gloucestershire area, is being found to have a wider distribution. The capture of one in West Sussex during a British Entomological & Natural History Society field meeting fills in a big gap in its distribution.

Acrolepia assectella (Zell.) was reported in a newspaper to be a pest in South Devon; when the species was first found it was stated how this was a potential pest, but after an initial spread it seems to have withdrawn and maintained a foothold only in a few coastal localities in Kent and Suffolk – until this record.

COLEOPHORIDAE

The newly recognised *Coleophora prunifoliae* Doets was found not uncommonly in Devon, Cornwall and Essex, usually near the coast; there were also more records of *C. adjectella* H.-S. Cases of both these species are to be found on blackthorn.

C. linosyridella Fuchs was bred by N.F. Heal from *Aster tipolium* growing in the Thames Estuary, both in Kent and Essex, this is an interesting addition to our fauna especially in view of the unusual foodplant. Again in the Thames Estuary it was encouraging to hear that cases of *C. machinella* Bradley were found on *Artemisia maritima*, this was the biology given by Machin, but it had not been found since early in this century. Recently Dr. J. R. Langmaid found the species feeding on *Achillea ptarmica* in Hampshire. Another long lost species was *C. vibicigerella* Zell. rediscovered in Kent by R. W. J. Uffen.

OECOPHORIDAE

Depressaria weirella Staint. in recent years has been found elusive, but one was bred from *Arthriscus sylvestris* from Worcs. by Dr. A. N. B. Simpson, while several others were bred from S. E. Essex. *Agonopterix astrantiae* (Hein.), another extremely elusive species, was bred from W. Sussex by R. J. Heckford; the foodplant was *Sanicula europaeus* which confirms earlier speculation that this might be a host plant for the species in Britain.

GELECHIIDAE

The sharp eye of Dr. K. Sattler at the Annual Exhibition of the British Entomological & Natural History Society detected a specimen of *Metzneria aprilella* H.-S. (new to Britain) which was taken in Wiltshire by Dr. K. Bland; until then this was wrongly identified as

M. neuropterella (Zell.). It has been subsequently found that many supposed specimens of *M. neuropterella* from Hampshire are in fact *M. aprilella*.

Caryocolum visciella (Staint.) was found to have greatly increased its range during 1980, being found especially in many parts of Essex by A. M. Emmet.

SCYTHRIDIDAE

Another remarkable species new to Britain was *Scythris inspersella* (Hubn.) found independently by both Dr. K. Sattler and J. L. Fenn to be breeding in Norfolk. The species seems to be locally well established, feeding on *Epilobium angustifolium*.

TORTRICIDAE

It is surprising that the publication by the Ray Society of the second volume dealing with this family has not yet led to increased interest and more new discoveries. However it is encouraging to note that *Celypha woodiana* (Barrett) has been bred in the West Country by both Dr. A. N. B. Simpson and Dr. M. W. Harper. Until it was bred in 1979 by E. C. Pelham-Clinton, no search for it had been successful for a very long time.

Of similar importance is the capture near Selkirk by Dr. Bland of *Apotomis infida* Hein.

PYRALIDAE

Records of migration details are the subject of another paper, but it is worth noting that *Diasemia ramburialis* (Dup.) was taken in a few scattered localities.

Pseudoscorpiones: Provisional Atlas of the Archnida of the British Isles (European Invertebrate Survey) part 1, edited by P. E. Jones (1980) for the Biological Records Centre, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology. Price £2.00.

Arachnologists and students of terrestrial microfaunas will certainly welcome this publication of all known records of the distribution of British and Irish pseudoscorpions. Maps for all 25 species which make up the accepted list are presented on 10 km sq format together with notes describing their particular occurrence and habitat. The division of the records into: pre 1960 and post 1960 is undoubtedly of interest in this group as the accuracy of identification has evidently improved in recent years. The maps give a good impression of our pseudoscorpion biogeography and I do not share the editor's misgivings that few of the maps show any distinct patterns of distribution. Indeed, for aside from rarities, one species is clearly western, six are southern, four are coastal and eleven are generally distributed. — P. D. HILLYARD.